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**Hotel Kärntnerhof,
Innere Stadt (1st)**
Saucy heritage

Tucked in an alley near St Stephen's Cathedral, this three-star hotel behind a classic 19th-century façade could easily be missed if it weren't for the eye-catching neon sign outside. Once a brothel (military veterans do occasionally wander in, asking "where are the girls?"), the Kärntnerhof has made a name for itself as the smallest of Vienna's grand hotels.

For its 2013 reopening designer Niccolò Grassi and director Nicole Nagel decorated the 44 rooms with custom furniture and a mix of old and new pieces from flea markets and international brands. The hotel lacks a restaurant but its homemade Madame Rosa jam – named for the madam of the old brothel – is a treat, and staff will also happily direct guests to the best bistros in town.

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kärntnerhof.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: Ask to stay in the Dom-Suite for a view of the cathedral; otherwise we'd recommend the Christiane Hörbiger Suite, named after the Austrian TV actress who lives next door and helped design elements of the hotel.